

## **NATIONAL REGISTRATION**

Article 42 of the Constitution provides entitlement for citizens of Guyana to be so registered. Section 6(4)(b) of the National Registration Act, Chapter 19:08 clearly denotes that it is the responsibility of eligible persons to apply for registration. The seriousness of this responsibility is underscored by the imposition of penalties for non-compliance.

## **HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION**

House-to-House Registration essentially entails the registration of persons by house-to-house visits. The methodology for House-to-House Registration entails Registration Teams of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) visiting persons at their places of residence throughout Guyana to fill out Application for Registration Forms and to take their respective fingerprints and photographs, in the presence of Divisional Scrutineers, providing the potential registrant meets the eligibility criteria for Registration. This being done, all of the information will be forwarded to the GECOM Secretariat via the respective Registration Area Offices for processing.

The imperative to conduct the 2008 House-to-House Registration exercise was born out of the need for the creation of an indisputable National Register of Registrants (NRR) which could be used as the basis for the preparation of Electoral Lists that would be commonly acceptable by all stakeholders as being unblemished. With this in mind, the Government of Guyana, Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) and the Parliamentary Political Parties agreed on June 14, 2007, to the preparation of a new NRR by House-to-House Registration. It is the expectation of GECOM therefore, that the primary outcome of the exercise will be the creation of a pure national Register of Registrants Database (NRRDB) which would lead to the establishment of future Electoral Lists that would be commonly acceptable by and among all Political Parties and other stakeholders.

## **CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION**

Subsequent to the 2001 General and Regional Elections, political parties had agitated for legislative changes which would ensure that a new system of voter registration guarantees Guyanese in general, but more specifically their own supporters, their Constitutional right to be registered and vote at future General, Regional and Local Government Elections.

This led to the introduction of Continuous Registration with two primary objectives i.e. (1) introducing a system which would ensure that all eligible persons are afforded unlimited opportunities to become registered on the National Register of Registrants Database and (2), ensuring that GECOM is in a perpetual state of preparedness which would enable it to respond to calls for elections in a timely manner thus guaranteeing eligible persons their Constitutional right to become registered in accordance with the relevant legal provisions and to cast their ballots at future General, Regional and Local Government Elections.

## **WHO COULD APPLY FOR REGISTRATION**

Any person who will be 14 years or over by a date to be determined by the Guyana Elections Commission, and who is a Guyanese citizen by birth, descent, naturalization or

is a citizen from a Commonwealth country living in Guyana for one year or more is eligible for registration during this House-to-House Registration exercise.

### **SOURCE DOCUMENTS FOR REGISTRATION**

An original Birth Certificate issued by the General Register Office or a valid Guyana Passport must be provided in support of an application for registration.

Other source documents which will have to be provided in support of applications for registration are:-

- Original Marriage Certificate and original Birth Certificate – in the case of a name change by way of marriage.
- Original Deed Poll and original Birth Certificate – in the case of any change of name by Deed Poll.
- Original Naturalization Certificate issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs and original Birth Certificate/Valid Passport – in the case of naturalization.

All persons who are eligible for registration, but who are not in possession of the relevant supporting document(s) above stated are urged to take immediate steps to acquire the said documents in order to facilitate their respective registration during this 6-month House-to-House Registration exercise.

**Baptismal Certificates, expired passports, photocopies of relevant documents or letters from Priests, Elders, Head Masters, Village Captains/Touchous and Justices of the Peace nor existing ID Cards will NOT be acceptable as source documents for registration.**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONS ELIGIBLE TO REGISTER**

Rights always go with responsibilities: Accordingly, if you are eligible for registration, your responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that you possess the relevant source document(s) (see above) required for the purpose of your registration.
- Ensuring that you make yourself available to apply for registration when the registration Staff visit your residence.
- Give only true and correct information to the Registration Staff for the purpose of your registration.
- Ensuring that all of your personal data on the Application for Registration Form (RO1) are correct before signing it.

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A REGISTRANT**

You have the civic responsibility to:-

Check the List of Registrants that will be posted in your Registration Area from time to time to ensure that your name is included therein.

Report any irregularity regarding the Registration process to the Registration Officer responsible for your Registration Area.

## **REGISTRATION OFFENCES**

Registration offences are actions and practices that are prohibited by law.

Please note that:

- Registering more than once could be deemed as a registration offence.
- Giving false information for the purpose of registration could be deemed as a registration offence.
- Failure to apply for Registration could be deemed as a registration offence.

A person found guilty of a Registration offence may be liable on summary conviction to a fine of sixteen thousand two hundred and fifty dollars or to imprisonment for six months. The same shall apply to the parent or guardian of any child of the age of fourteen years, who refuses to make such an application on a child's behalf, if the eligibility of such child for registration at his/her residence in his/her Registration Division on the qualifying date is proven to the satisfaction of the court.

## **NATIONAL REGISTER OF REGISTRANTS DATABASE**

Section 9(1) of the National Registration Act, Chapter 19:08, as amended by Section 7 of the National Registration (Amendment) Act No. 14 of 2005 provides for the establishment of a computerised central register of all persons registered under this Act. Accordingly, the Commission will establish a "National Register of Registrants Database (NRDB) which will consist of the originals of the registration records of all persons registered under the Act as one of the primary outcomes of the House-to-House Registration.

## **BENEFITS OF HAVING A NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION CARD**

The National Identification Card is a legitimate instrument of identification for the person in whose name it is issued. It is convenient to carry around in handbags or pocket wallets.

- National Identification Cards are required for the following:-
- Applying for driver licences, loans, passports or police clearance certificates.
- Transacting business at a Commercial Bank or Post Office
- Arranging hire purchase transactions
- Collecting old age pensions, National Insurance and other benefits
- Identifying the holder for the purpose of voting at elections.
- A National Identification Card does not expire every five years like a passport, and if it is lost or damaged, it is much easier and cheaper to get a replacement for it than as is the case with a lost passport.

## **NOTIFYING THE PUBLIC ABOUT COMPLETED REGISTRATION TRANSACTIONS**

In order to facilitate public scrutiny of completed registration transactions, as another measure of transparency, appropriate lists containing the names, addresses, occupations, and identity numbers of the persons registered will be produced by the Secretariat and displayed periodically at the respective Registration Offices.